

CHAPTER

7

JACK  
IN THE  
BOX



# “Jack-In-The-Box”

Originally Published: “Big Comic Spirits” *Uzumaki*, Chapter 7, Shogakukan, 1999

Story and Art: Junji Ito

Editor: Nakaguma-san

English Adaptation: Yuki Oniki c/o Viz Media

Submitted by: E.M. Tonner

## Preface

For someone who’s read many, many horror comics, *Uzumaki* (“*spiral*” in Japanese) is a breath of fresh air delivered by tornado. It really is *that* good. Published in 1999, I consider this work to be the evolution of the horror comic, the new benchmark. It shouldn’t be that surprising... the Japanese have been doing good horror for some time now and there was never a Comics Code Authority in Japan. “*Uzumaki*” was actually intended for young men as Japanese comics (*manga*) are designed to have a wider age appeal than Western comics. Sensitive readers may relax, as there’s no sex and only naked cadavers. What there is however is an entire town’s descent into madness through a spiral-shaped path...

I’ve chosen Chapter 7 ‘Jack-In-The-Box’ as it’s a beautiful (and horrific) standalone tale. Also, I may just have nostalgic feelings for those ‘twisted’ endings. Many people feel that Chapter 9 “The Black Lighthouse” is the best story in the series. Having grown up near a large marsh, “Mosquitoes” was also very personal for me (and one of the most gruesome). Any of these could have been presented here.

### **All you need to know:**

The small town of Kurôzu-cho (where Kirie lives) has been cursed by the shape of the spiral. Strange and terrible things have befallen the town’s residents via spiral shaped tragedies. Kirie and her boyfriend Shuichi have been a witness to these bizarre tragic events yet are unable to escape Kurôzu-cho.

### **Warning:**

The following content is intended for mature readers. It may contain scenes of extreme violence, nudity, and adult situations.

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IN MY SCHOOL THERE WAS A SEVENTH-GRADER NAMED MITSURU YAMAGUCHI.

HE LOVED TO JUMP OUT AND SURPRISE PEOPLE.

EVERYONE CALLED HIM "JACK-IN-THE-BOX."

BOO!

BOO!

ONE DAY I REALIZED HE LIKED ME.

KIRIE! LET'S GO OUT SOME-TIME!

I THINK I LOST HIM.

WHAT A PAIN.

IT GOT ON MY NERVES PRETTY FAST.

LET'S HURRY HOME BEFORE HE FINDS YOU.

GOOD IDEA, SHIHO.



DON'T YOU THINK IT'S CREEPY THAT WE HAVE TO WALK THROUGH A CEMETERY ON OUR WAY TO SCHOOL?

YEAH.



HEY, KIRIE...

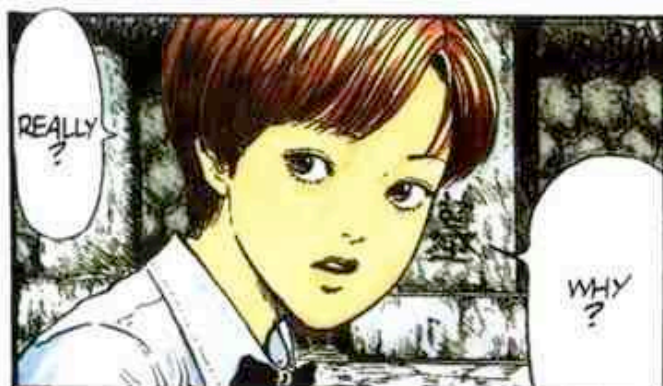


DID YOU HEAR THEY'RE BURYING PEOPLE AGAIN?

THEY'RE WHAT?



BURYING THEM, INSTEAD OF CREMATING THEM.



REALLY?

WHY?



Oh, COME ON!  
ISN'T IT  
OBVIOUS?



DO YOU  
REMEMBER  
HOW THE  
SMOKE  
FROM  
THE  
CREMATIONS...

...WOULD  
FORM  
A  
BLACK  
SPIRAL  
IN  
THE  
SKY?



SOME  
PEOPLE  
SAID THAT IT  
WAS BECAUSE  
OF A  
MALFUNCTION  
IN THE  
FURNACE.

OTHERS  
SAID  
IT'S  
BECAUSE  
OF  
THE  
WEATHER.



BUT I  
HEARD THAT  
EVEN WHEN  
SOMEONE  
WHO'S DIED  
HERE IS  
CREMATED  
SOMEWHERE  
ELSE, THE  
SMOKE TURNS  
INTO A BLACK  
SPIRAL.

IT  
ONLY  
HAPPENS  
WITH  
PEOPLE  
FROM  
OUR  
TOWN.

Spiral Into Horror

# UZUMAKI

by Junji Ito

2

ULP GRAPHIC NOVEL

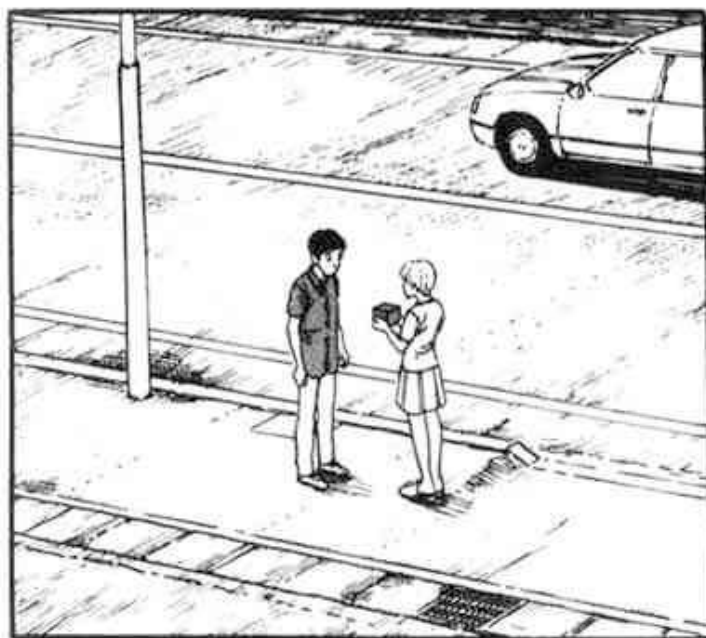


















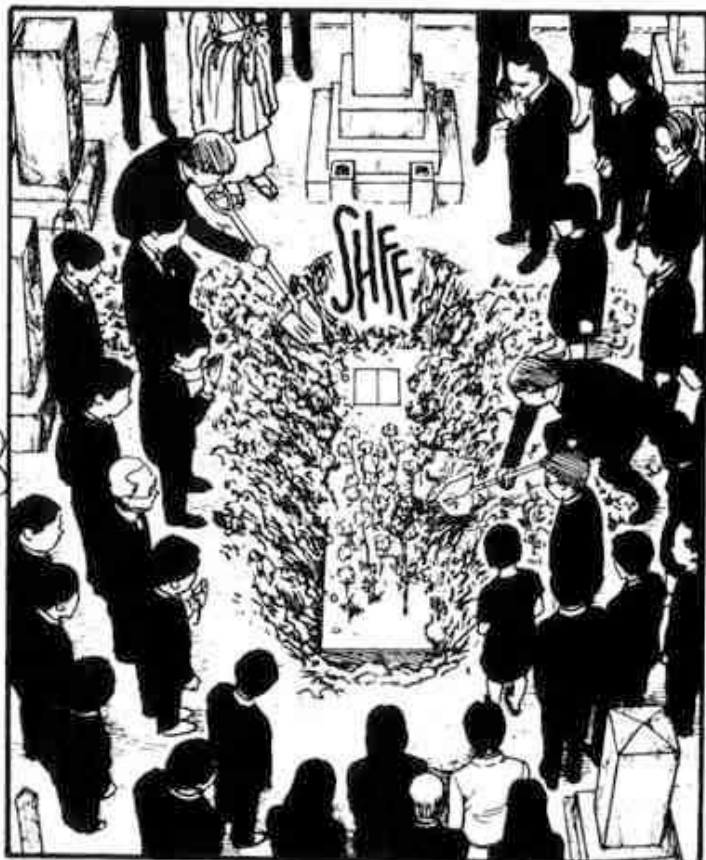
I HEARD JACK IN- THE BOX WAS KILLED IN A CAR CRASH!

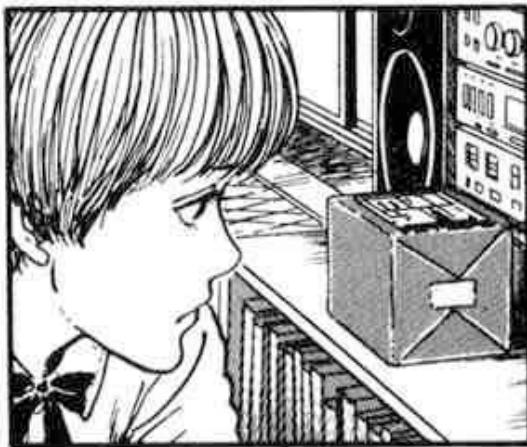
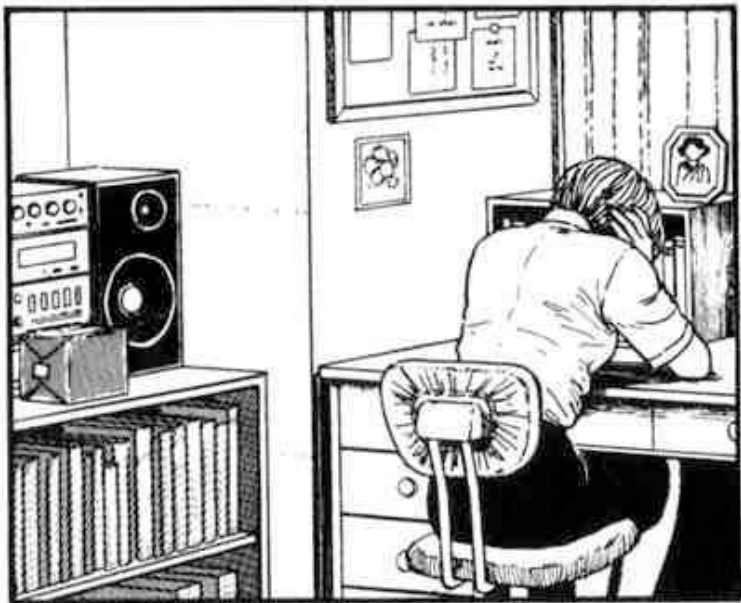
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!

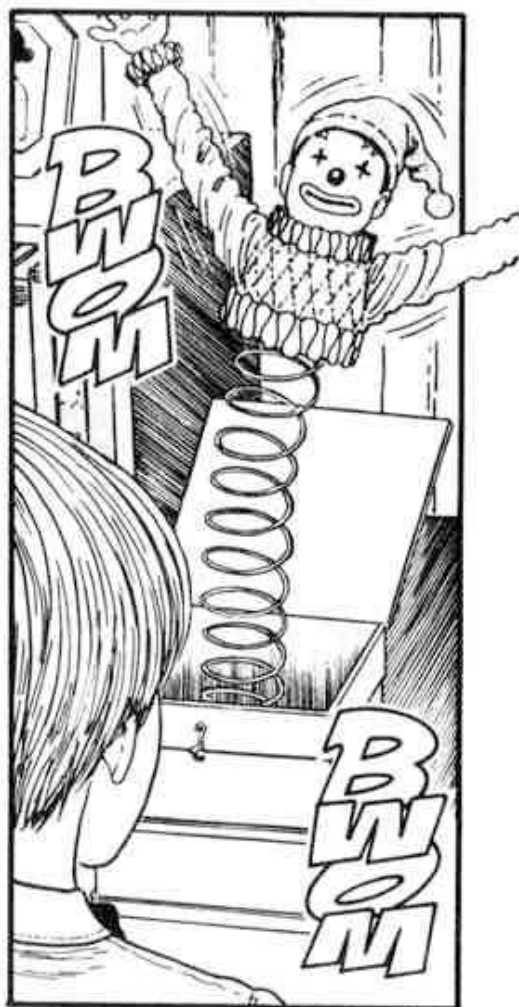
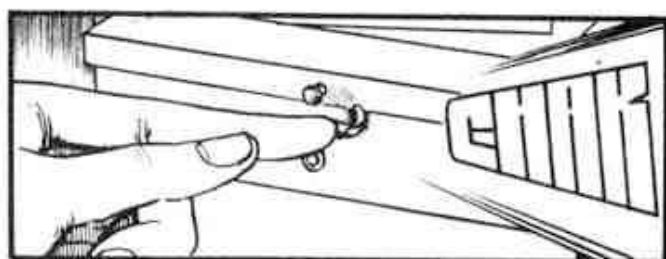
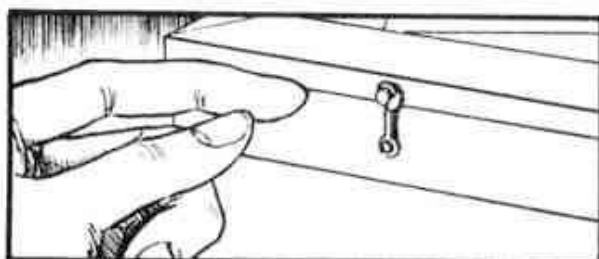
HIS BODY GOT JAMMED IN THE FRONT WHEEL!

THEY HAD TO USE A BLOWTORCH TO EXTRACT HIS BODY FROM THE CAR!

IT'S GOING TO BE A CLOSED-CASKET FUNERAL!











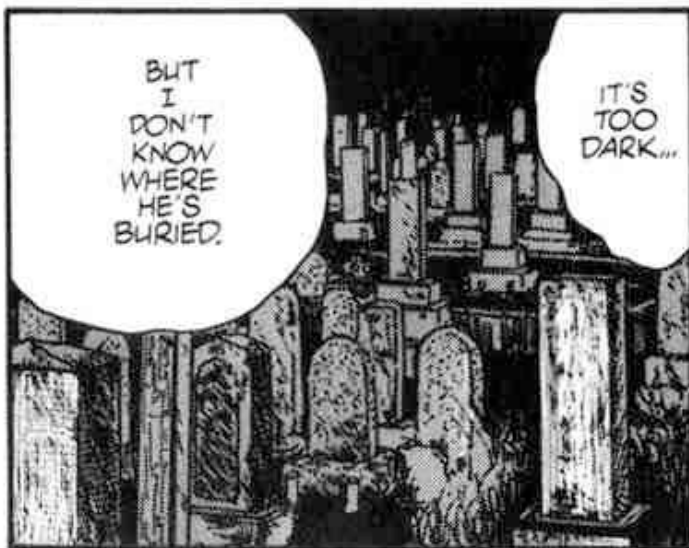




SHUICHI...

I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE GOING TO DO THIS.

W-WE HAVE TO... JUST TAKE ME TO HIS GRAVE.



BUT I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE'S BURIED.

IT'S TOO DARK...



WELL, WE CAN'T DIG HIM UP IN THE DAY-TIME.

THIS IS THE ONLY TIME WHEN WE WON'T GET CAUGHT.



BUT, uh...

WHAT WAS YOUR PLAN?



ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?

I'M GOING TO HAMMER THIS STAKE INTO HIS HEART BEFORE HE CAN COME BACK TO LIFE!



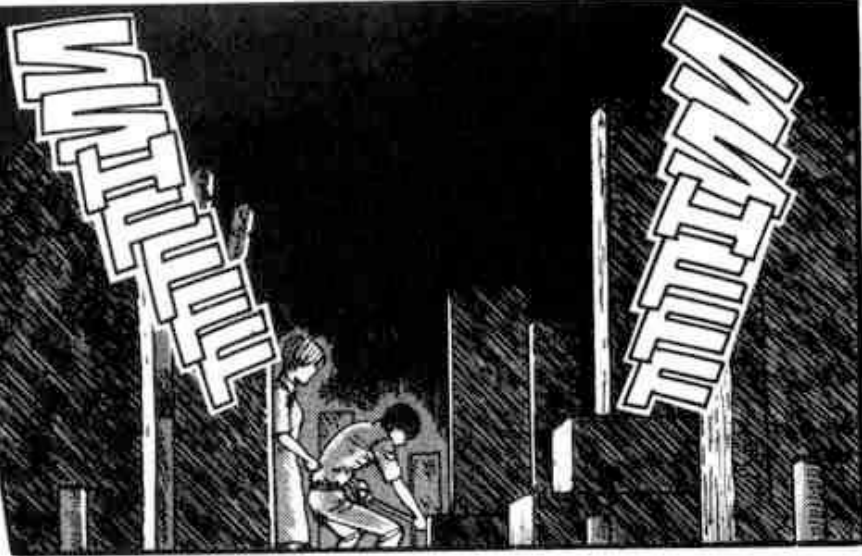
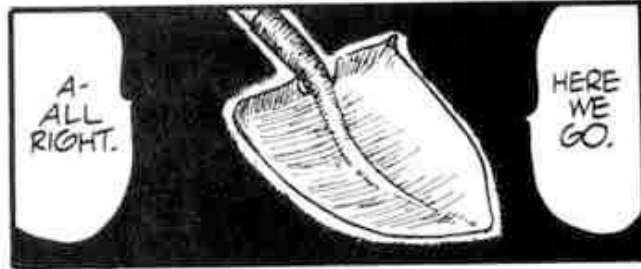
SO YOU BELIEVE WHAT THAT CLOWN SAID? Uh... I don't think he's a VAMPIRE...

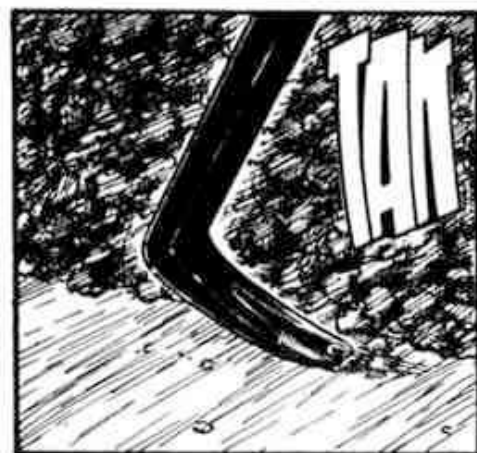
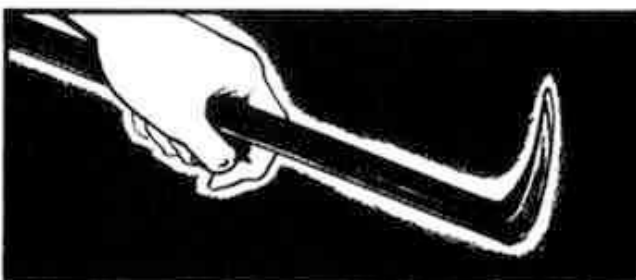
TELL ME, HOW YOU CAN BELIEVE A TOY CLOWN SAID ANYTHING AT ALL?

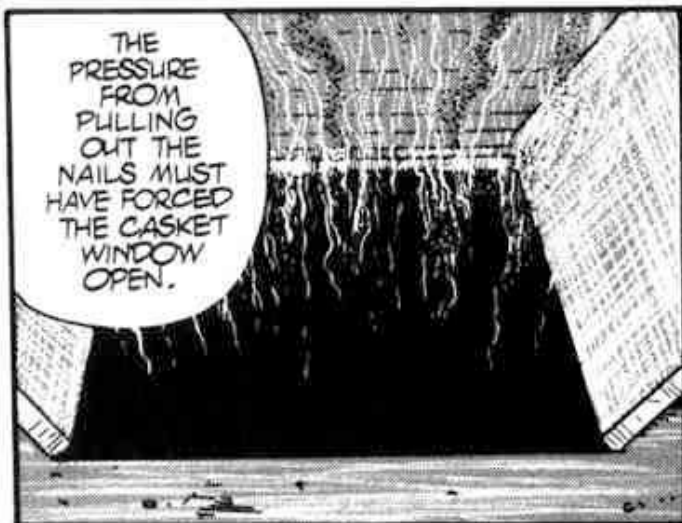
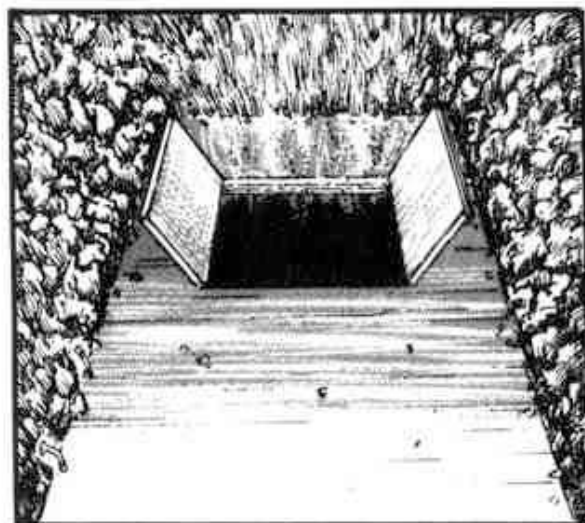


NOTHING IS UNBELIEVABLE IN THIS TOWN!









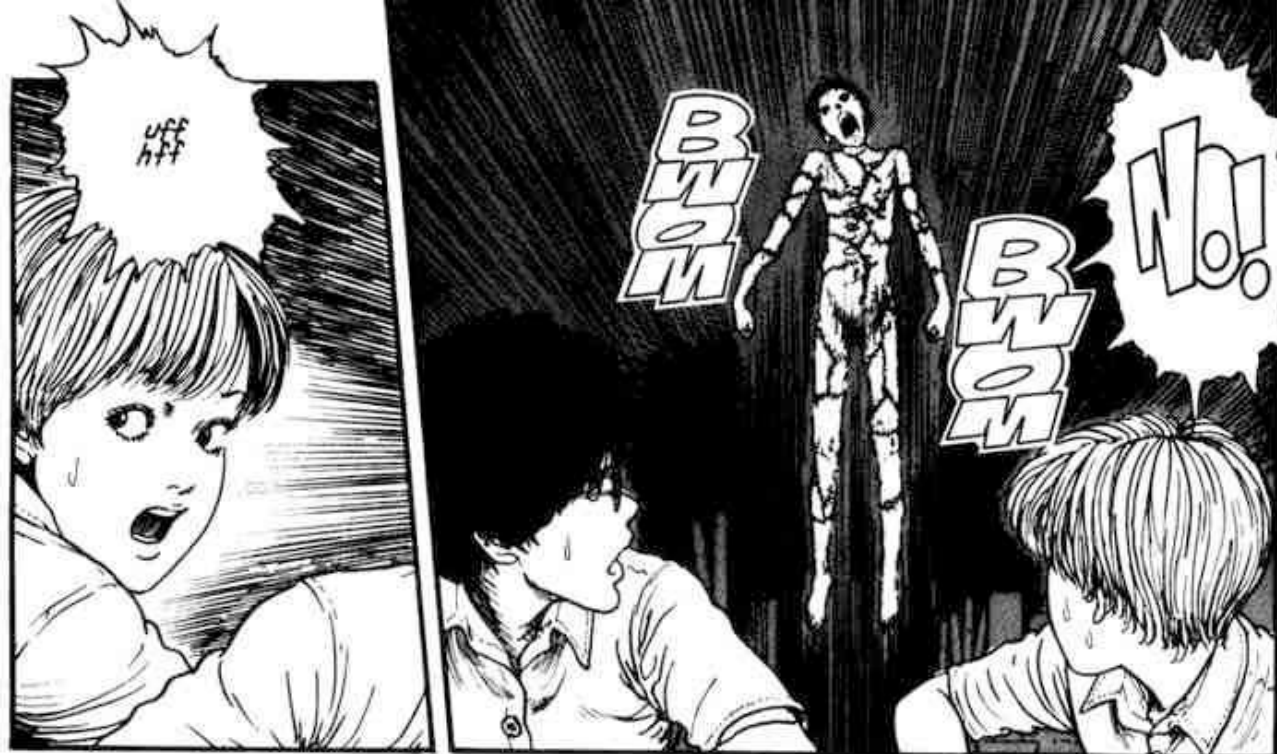


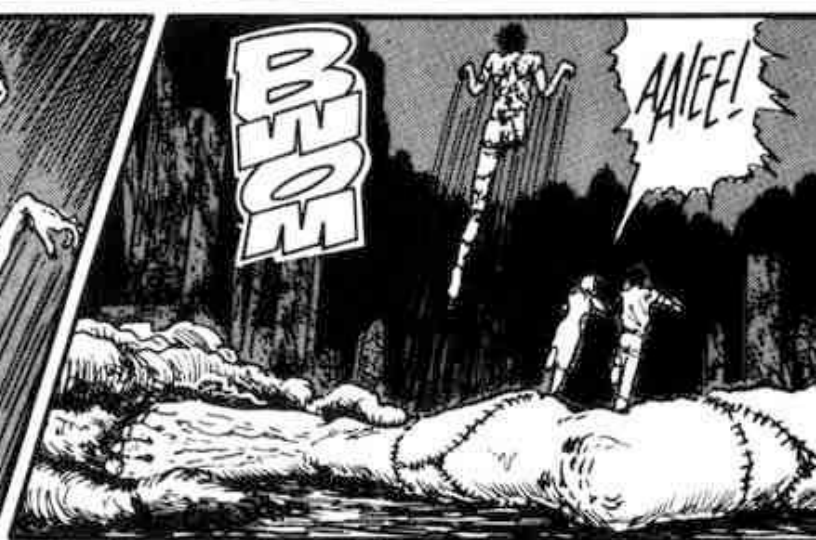














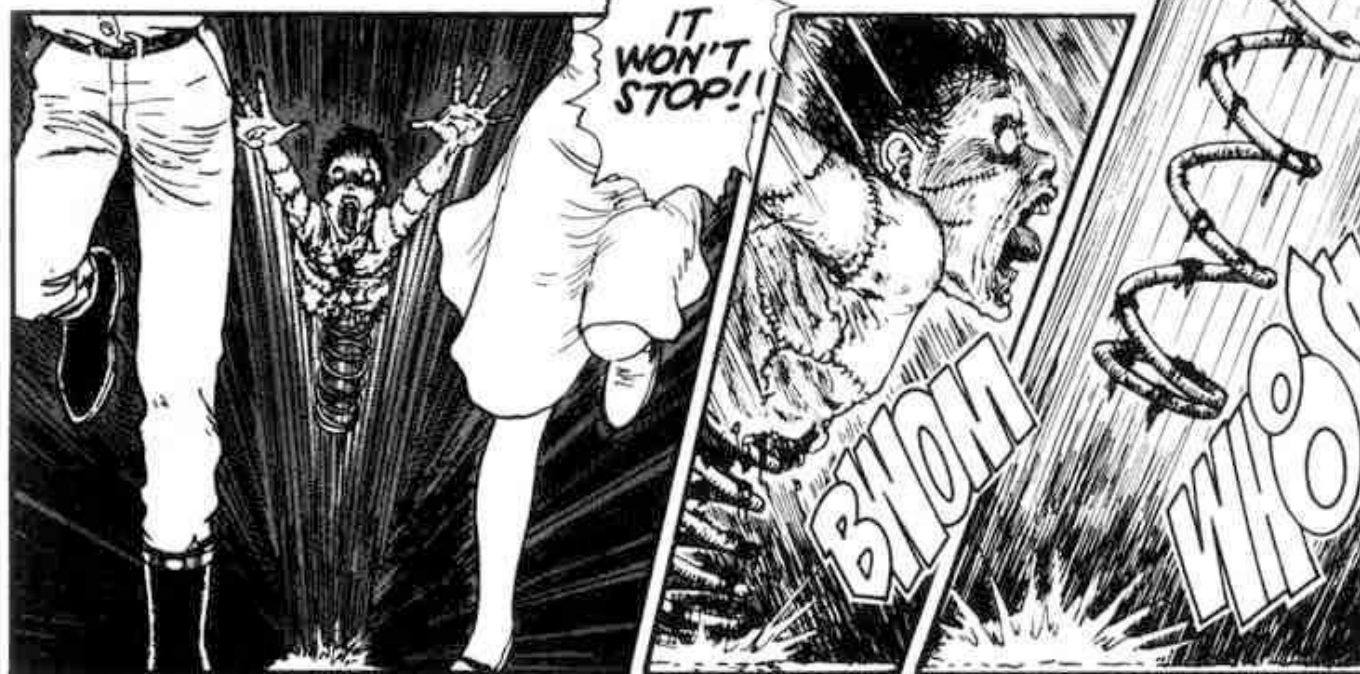


EEYAAA!











uff

hff



THAT'S  
THE  
SUSPENSION  
FROM  
THE  
CAR!

THE  
FRONT  
WHEEL  
SPRING  
WAS  
LODGED  
INTO  
HIM!

IT  
WAS  
NEVER  
REMOVED  
FROM  
THE  
CORPSE!



I DON'T  
THINK  
"JACK-IN-  
THE-BOX"  
...

...WILL  
EVER  
BE  
BACK  
AGAIN...

## **Afterword**

I love the dark irony of this chapter. Yamaguchi as the cadaverous jack-in-the-casket propelled by the car's suspension coil embedded in his mangled body... well done Mr. Ito. *Uzumaki* was nominated for an Eisner when it was translated in 2002. Simply put, it's one of the best pieces of horror fiction in comics this generation. I won't gush anymore or launch into a review of the entire series. I will just say it's mandatory reading for fans of the genre.

While I would strongly push for readers to purchase the graphic novels (which are easily available online), I will note that the scanned manga is available online. Anime and manga have a long history of copyright infringement. Simply put, the Japanese are not a litigious society (they don't have many lawyers). Interestingly enough, I have watched the popularity of manga and anime boom over the past 20 years. Is there a lesson here...

*“What is art but life upon the larger scale, the higher. When, graduating up in a spiral line of still expanding and ascending gyres, it pushes toward the intense significance of all things, hungry for the infinite?”*

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

### **Discussion:**

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Best Horror Comics Forum – <http://besthorrorcomics.yuku.com/topic/23/>

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### **Reprinted In:**

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